

IV. REMARKS

Claim Rejections under 35 USC § 102

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7-10, 12, 14, 16-18, 20 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Schaefer (US Patent 1,934,951).

Claim Rejections under 35 USC § 103

Claims 2, 4, 6, 11, 13, 15, 19, 21 and 23-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schaefer.

In the Office Action, the examiner recommends that the precise shape of the structure should be claimed, including a narrow center having two ends with two lobes, and the claims should describe the triangular orientation of the posts

Applicant thanks the examiner for the recommendations.

In response to the rejections, and in consideration of the examiner's recommendations, the independent claims 1, 9, 17 and 25 have been amended to distinguish over Schaefer.

Briefly, claims 1 and 25 now recite, among other things, a body with a narrow center and two lobes at each end, and the posts in triangular orientation. Claims 9 and 17 do not include recitation of the two lobes, but do clarify the triangular orientation of the posts. The noted dependent claims have been amended for correspondence with the amended independent claims. The amendments to the specification are for correspondence with the wording of the amended claims.

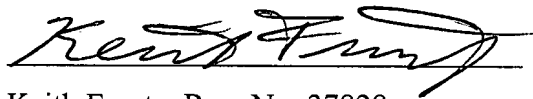
In contrast to the present invention as now defined in the claims, Schaefer shows a buckle with either two or four posts for securing to a strap. The posts either extend parallel to the back face of the buckle or are bendable to a position parallel to the back face of the buckle. Although Figs. 1 and 6 show the posts extending straight away from the buckle, the specification and additional figures make clear that such position is a temporary one, and effective use of the buckle requires the posts to bend over and claim the strap against the back face of the buckle.

Further, the four posts of the Schaefer configuration buckle are aligned in two directions for purposes discussed therein.

Further, Applicant does not believe that the rejections based on Schaefer are well founded. To be operative, the strap must loop past the back face of the Schaefer buckle for engagement with the bent posts, whereas there is no such requirement for use of the training aid of the present invention. In the embodiment of the present invention shown and discussed, the strap loops around the front of the training aid, and such an arrangement would render the Schaefer buckle non-operative. In short, one skilled in the relevant art of dog training aids would not understand from the buckle of Schaefer, or any other similar buckle, alone or in combination with other prior art of record, to arrive at a dog training aid in accordance with the present invention, nor would such skilled artisans even look in or necessarily be aware of the buckle art as proposed in the Office Action.

Accordingly, Applicant believes the claims in the application now distinguish over Schaefer and the other prior art of record, and are in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Frantz", written over a horizontal line.

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